

Political Update – May 2006

Congratulations to all of the Italian-American incumbents, who fared well in the March Primary Election, and two newcomers who will have a shot at the November General Elections.

U.S. Representative Donald Manzullo (Republican) was unopposed in the primary but will face opposition in November. Democratic candidate Paul Mangieri lost in his bid on the state treasurer's office.

In the state senate races, incumbent Democrat candidates Sen. James DeLeo and Sen. Debbie DeFrancesco Halvorson were unopposed in their races. Those seeking to fill open seats included Democratic candidate James Morici in the 33rd District; and Republican candidate Rita Mullins, currently mayor of Palatine, in the 27th District. Both Mullins and Morici were unsuccessful in their races, as was Democratic candidate Michael Nardello, who ran in the 39th District against a formidable incumbent.

Incumbents in the State House of Representatives were all successful in their respective races. Those included Democrat Rep. John D'Amico, 15th District; Democrat Frank Mautino (unopposed) 76th District; Democrat Robert Molaro (Unopposed) 21st District; Republican Rosemary Mulligan (unopposed) 65th District; Republican Dennis Reboletti (unopposed) 43rd District; Democrat Robert Rita in the 28th District; and Republican Angelo "Skip" Saviano (unopposed) in the 77th District.

Newcomer Republican candidate Franco Coladipietro put up a very tough race and unseated the incumbent in the 45th District. Republican Pamela Fenner was the winner in the 55th District against an appointed incumbent. My heartiest congratulations and best wishes to these two candidates as they prepare for the November elections.

Cook County Commissioner Peter Silvestri trounced his opponent in the 9th District; Larry Suffredin was unopposed in the primary.

In other races, Republican Robert Provenzano was unsuccessful in his bid for Maine Township Committeeman; incumbent Republican Robert Ingraffia was unopposed for Cook County Regional School Superintendent; Republican Darlene Ruscitti was unopposed for DuPage Regional Superintendent; and Republican Michael Formento won in heated race for DuPage County Forest Preserve Commissioner.

Italian-American candidates running in judicial races included Judge David Erickson (Democratic), overwhelming won his bid for 1st District Appellate Court. In the Cook County Circuit Court races, Lawrence Andolino (Democrat) lost in the 11th Subcircuit, Jill Cerone Marisie (Republican) won in the 13th Subcircuit; Anthony Scrementi (Republican) won in the 15th Subcircuit; and James Tatoes (Republican) was unsuccessful in the 12th Subcircuit, Siebel vacancy.

In other news, State Senate Majority Leader Debbie DeFrancesco Halvorson is co-sponsoring legislation that will strengthen reporting of released radioactive materials by businesses in Illinois. House Bill 1620 requires the owner or operator of any nuclear power plant in Illinois to report within 24 hours any unpermitted release of any radioactive materials to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. It also calls on the Illinois EPA to propose rules to the Pollution Control Board on standards for detecting unpermitted releases of radioactive substances.

Rep. Rosemary Mulligan sponsored a bill to increase the availability of information to lawmakers and the public on the state ALL KIDS health coverage program. Easily passed by the house, HB5296 will require the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to annually publish the premiums and also requires the department to submit copies of all contracts awarded for the administration of the program. The bill now advances to the Senate.

U.S. House Small Business Committee Chairman Don Manzullo was listed as one of the “Best Friends in D.C.” for America’s small business owners in the February 2006 issue of “Inc. Magazine.” Manzullo was the only U.S. Congressman listed among the top 19 small business advocates in our nation’s capitol.

Congressman Manzullo says a report he requested from the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) reinforces the need to enhance small business efforts at the Export-Import Bank to ensure America’s small employers are getting the financing they need to compete internationally. As of 2002 , EX-Im is required to set aside at least 20 percent of its financing for small businesses. However, since then, it has failed to meet this mandates. The Ex-Im Bank provides loan guarantees and insurance to commercial banks to make trade credits available to U.S. exporters. Of its clients, 86 percent are small employers.

This column is written by Nina Albano Vidmer, executive director of the Italian American Political Coalition. To submit information, please fax to 708-401-0360 by the first of each month for consideration in the following month’s issue.